

#### IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine comprising:
  - a data reading means for reading character data from at least ~~one~~ two inserted trading card ~~under control of a CPU~~ cards, each trading card storing a set of character data;
  - an advancing unit for advancing a game based on the read character data;
  - a combining unit for combining at least two sets of character data when a first predetermined condition is satisfied in the advanced game;
  - a determining unit for determining at least one set of character data of a reward trading card based on the combined character data; and
  - a payout means for paying out ~~at least one the~~ reward trading card ~~under control of the CPU which stores the determine set of character data,~~
  - wherein ~~a set of character data of the at least one reward trading card is determined by combining the read character data, when the prescribed conditions that are satisfied in the game.~~
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the payout ~~means~~ unit includes writing ~~means~~ unit for writing the determine set of character data ~~updated character data~~ in the ~~at least one~~ reward trading card, ~~the updated character data being based on results of the game.~~
4. (Canceled)
5. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the set of character data includes capability and attribute values.
6. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein

the payout ~~means~~unit includes printing ~~means~~unit for printing an image of the determined set of character data on a surface of the ~~at least one~~ reward trading card.

7. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine comprising:  
three slots into which two or three ~~a plurality of~~ trading cards can be inserted, each trading card storing a set of character data;  
a card reader which reads a set of character data from ~~the at least one~~ inserted trading card;  
an advancing device which advances a game based on the read character data;  
a combining device which combines at least two sets of character data, when a prescribed condition is satisfied in the advanced game;  
a determining device which determines at least one set of character data of a reward trading card; and  
a payout device which pays for paying out a the reward trading card storing the determined set of character data; and  
~~a controller which executes a predetermined computer program, the controller being connected to the card reader and the card writer,~~  
~~wherein the controller causes the card reader to read the character data, determines the set of character data of the reward trading card by combining the read character data, and causes the payout device to pay out the reward trading card.~~

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling a gaming machine, comprising steps of:  
reading character data from at least ~~one~~ two inserted trading-card cards, each trading card storing a set of character data;  
advancing a game based on the read character data;

receiving an instruction of combining the character data, when a first  
prescribed condition is satisfied in ~~a~~ the advanced game;  
combining ~~the read~~ at least two sets of character data in response to the  
instructions;  
~~to determine~~ determining at least one set of ~~updated~~ character data of a  
reward trading card based on the combined character data; and  
writing the set of updated character data to ~~at least one~~ the reward trading  
card;  
wherein ~~one set of character data is determined by combining two sets of read~~  
character data.

10. (Currently Amended) The method for controlling the gaming machine  
according to claim 9, further comprising steps of:

~~advancing a game based on the character data~~; and  
changing the character data based on results of the game.

11. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine comprising:  
three slots into which at least two trading cards can be inserted, each of the  
trading card storing a set of character data;  
a card reader which reads character data from the inserted trading cards;  
a payout device for paying out a reward trading card; and  
a controller which executes a predetermined computer program, the controller  
being connected to the card reader and the payout device,  
wherein the controller causes the card reader to read the character data,  
advances a game based on the read character data, combines at least two sets of  
character data when a first predetermined condition is satisfied in the advanced  
game, determines the set of character data of the reward trading card based on the  
combined character data ~~by combining the read character data~~, and causes the  
payout device to pay out the reward trading card which stores the determined set of  
character data.

12. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, further comprising a changing unit for changing a number of combining set and a number of determining set in response to proceedings of the game.

13. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, further comprising a generating unit for generating a set of character data when a second predetermined condition is satisfied in the advanced game, wherein  
the determining unit determines one set of character data of a reward trading card based on the second predetermined condition, and  
the payout unit pays out the reward trading card storing the determined set of character data.

14. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein  
the combining unit combines the entirety of the read character data, and  
the determining unit determines the entirety of the rewarded character data based on the combined character data.

15. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein  
the combining unit combines the entirety of the read character data, and  
the determining unit determines a part of the rewarded character data based on the combined character data.

16. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein  
the combining unit combines a part of the read character data, and  
the determining unit determines the entirety of the rewarded character data based on the combined character data.

17. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein  
the combining unit combines a part of the read character data, and

the determining unit determines a part of the rewarded character data based on the character data.

18. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 1, further comprising an updating unit for updating the character data based on the results of the game.